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Friday, March 1, 2002, 8 p.m.
Walter Hall

Faculty Artist Series

Presents

St. Lawrence String Quartet

Geoff Nuttall & Barry Shiffman, violins;
Lesley Robertson, viola; Marina Hoover, cello

PROGRAMME

Christos Hatzis
b. 1953

String Quartet No. 2 (The Gathering)
1. Awakenings
2. Fleeting Moments
3. Nadir
4. Metamorphosis

INTERMISSION

Ottorino Respighi
1879-1936

Il Tramonto
Michèle Bogdanowicz, mezzo-soprano

Ozvaldo Golijov
b. 1960

Last Round
1. Movido, Urgente – Subito Meno Mosso
2. Lentissimo
St. Lawrence String Quartet
Kerry DuWors & Scott St. John, violins
Aidan Pendleton, viola; Ariel Barnes, cello
Edward Tait, double bass

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Programme Notes

String Quartet No. 2 (The Gathering)
CHRISTOS HATZIS
Born 1953 in Volos, Greece

String Quartet No. 2 (The Gathering) is a work in four movements commissioned by and dedicated to the St. Lawrence Quartet. The St. Lawrence Quartet is a superb and dynamic group of string instrumentalists with whom I had the great fortune of collaborating in my capacity as a professor at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto (the St. Lawrence quartet was the resident string quartet at the school between 1996 and 1999).

I worked on the composition intermittently for the better part of a year, putting the work aside for extended intervals of time during which I composed other music. Stylistically, my String Quartet No. 2 is an eclectic gathering of fragments of musical experience which I have collected over the years from diverse geographical and chronological sources. These fragments are put together in a manner reflective of my ongoing quest for a trans-national, trans-dogmatic view of the world and its inhabitants. The presence of heterogeneous stylistic elements in this piece also acts as a form of exorcism against the absurdity of war and senseless violence.

Awakenings, the first movement, starts with a statement of a quasi-middle eastern motif which appears in various guises throughout the piece. Even though the music is not minimalist per se, allusions to the music of the American minimalists of the 1960s, particularly Philip Glass, are evident throughout. The music starts softly with this mourning motif and gradually gains momentum peaking at the very end, and stops abruptly just short of a final cadence.

Fleeting Moments, the second movement, starts with a quotation from my String Quartet No. 1 (The Awakening). The gypsy-like ground from the end of that quartet becomes the foundation for further elaboration of this material, which occasionally sounds like distant echoes of Brazilian tango. Halfway through the movement the music gives way to an unpretentious dance reminiscent of Balkan and Middle eastern music. The dance gradually returns to the serene resignation of the borrowed ground and the music stops suspended, again with no definitive ending.

Most of the music (from the middle of the second movement to the end of the piece) was composed during the time of the terrible war in Kosovo and the continuous bombings of Belgrade. It was during those trying days that I decided to revisit Nadir, an earlier work, and transform it into the third movement of the present work. Originally scored for flute, viola and tape, Nadir was itself inspired by the horrors of war: it was composed during the devastating conflict between Iran and Iraq in 1988. The original piece has been modified significantly in its newest incarnation. Its "Islamic", Middle eastern timbre has been maintained—it was clearly appropriate for both contexts—but the latter part of the newer incarnation in the quartet follows a progress of its own, which is separate from the original. The stubborn ostinati of the end of the original are extended, re-orchestrated and intermingled with new material, becoming even more obstinate and compulsive in the process. This frantic process is interrupted twice by an Eastern Orthodox melody, a voice of deep spirituality in the midst of insanity and terror, which, however, is twice ignored by the frantic music racing towards a violent cadence.

Metamorphosis, the last movement picks up where the second movement left off. After several variations of the ground, and a ghostly reiteration of the Balkan-like dance (if the dance in the second movement was a dance of bodies, this one is a dance of souls), the music breaks abruptly into one last violent protestation, perhaps the most violent so far, before it is taken over (or under, as the case may be here) by the orthodox troparion of the Metamorphosis (Transfiguration) of our Saviour. Similar in mode and content to the chant which tried

to halt the progress of violence in the third movement, the troparion of Metamorphosis is a prayer for a spiritual metamorphosis to take place in the Balkans and turn this violent part of the world into a place of peace and enlightenment.
—*Christos Hatzis*

Il Tramonto
OTTORINO RESPIGHI
Born 1879 in Bologna, Italy
Died 1936 in Rome, Italy

Respighi's *Il Tramonto*, a lyrical poem for mezzo-soprano and string orchestra, was composed in 1918. It is a setting of Shelley's poem "The Sunset" in an Italian translation by Ascoli. The piece was written during a summer visit to Bologna, Respighi's birthplace, and was dedicated to the singer Chiarina Fino Savio, who sang the work at its première later that same year.

Il Tramonto is a sensitive setting, closely following the text and subtly evoking the poetic moods. The harmonies are delicate and crisp, and the instrumental accompaniment is colourful. It is a relatively early work for Respighi, who as of 1918 had composed only one successful work, namely his orchestral suite The Fountains of Rome of 1916. While his orchestral music tends to bear the obvious marks of his major influences—Rimsky-Korsakov and Richard Strauss—Respighi's chamber music, *Il Tramonto* included, more closely reflects his own style and sensibilities.
—*Alex Carpenter*

Last Round
OSVALDO GOLIJOV
Born 1960 in La Plata, Argentina

Astor Piazzolla, the last great Tango composer, was at the peak of his creativity when a stroke killed him seven years ago. He left us, in the words of the old tango, "without saying good bye", and on that day the musical face of Buenos Aires was abruptly frozen. The creation of that face had started a hundred years ago from the unlikely combination of African rhythms underlying gauchos' couplets, sung in the style of Sicilian canzonettas over an accompanying Andalucian guitar. As the years passed, all converged towards the bandoneon: a small accordion-like instrument without keyboard that was invented in Germany in the nineteenth century to serve as a portable church organ and which, after finding its true home in the bordellos of Buenos Aires' slums in the 1920's, went back to Europe to conquer Paris' high society in the 1930's. Since then it reigned as the essential instrument for any Tango ensemble.

Piazzolla's bandoneon was able to condense all the symbols of tango. The eroticism of legs and torsos in the dance was reduced to the intricate patterns of his virtuoso fingers (a simple C major scale in the bandoneon zigzags so much as to leave an inexperienced player's fingers tangled). The melancholy of the singer's voice was transposed to the breathing of the bandoneon's continuous opening and closing. The macho attitude of the tangueros was reflected in his pose on stage: standing upright, chest forward, right leg on a stool, the bandoneon on top of it, being by turns raised, battered, caressed.

I composed *Last Round* (the title is borrowed from a short story on boxing by Julio Cortázar) as an imaginary chance for Piazzolla's spirit to fight one more time. The piece is conceived as an idealized bandoneon. There are two movements: the first represents the act of a violent compression of the instrument and the second a final, seemingly endless opening sigh (it is actually a fantasy over the refrain of the song "My Beloved Buenos Aires", composed by the legendary Carlos Gardel in the 1930's). But *Last Round* is also a sublimated tango dance. Two quartets confront each other, separated by the focal bass, with violins and violas standing up as in the traditional tango orchestras. The bows fly in the air as inverted legs in crisscrossed choreography, always attracting and repelling each other, always in danger of clashing, always avoiding it with the immutability that can only be acquired by transforming hot passion into pure pattern. —*Ozvaldo Golijov*

Biographies

Having walked on stage together over 1500 times in the last twelve years, the **St. Lawrence String Quartet** has established itself among the world-class chamber ensembles of its generation. The group continues to build on its reputation for imaginative, spontaneous music making that the Washington Post calls "emotionally high charged but never out of control."

Since their genesis in Toronto in 1989, the St. Lawrence has delighted audiences across Europe, Asia, North and South America. The group enjoyed mentoring with the Emerson, Tokyo and Juilliard String Quartets and spent several summers at the Aspen, Norfolk and Tanglewood Festivals. Since winning the Banff International String Quartet Competition and Young Concert Artists Auditions in the early 90's, the quartet has become a regular at some of North America's most esteemed music festivals including Spoleto USA, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Mostly Mozart in New York, and the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival. During the concert season, in addition to making appearances at such venues as New York's Lincoln Center and Washington's Kennedy Center, the St. Lawrence Quartet enjoys playing in less conventional locations and has undertaken regional tours of the Canadian Prairies and Maritime provinces, and the American Midwest. Recent tours of Europe have cast them onto the famed stages of London's Wigmore Hall, Paris' Théâtre de Ville and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw.

The foursome regularly delivers traditional quartet repertoire, but is also passionately committed to performing and expanding the works of living composers. Among those with whom the St. Lawrence Quartet currently has active working relationships are R. Murray Schafer, Osvaldo Golijov, Christos Hatzis, and Jonathan Berger.

The long awaited initial recording of the St. Lawrence Quartet, Schumann's First and Third Quartets, was released in May 1999 to great critical acclaim. The CD, first in a series with EMI Classics, received the coveted German critics award, the Preis der Deutchen Schallplattenkritik, as well as Canada's annual Juno Award, granted by the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences for "Best Classical Album: Solo or Chamber Ensemble." BBC Music Magazine gave the recording its "highest rating," calling it the benchmark recording of the work. In October of 2001, EMI released their recording of Tchaikovsky's First and Third Quartets to ecstatic reviews.

A long way from their native Canada, the St. Lawrence Quartet resides in California where they are the Ensemble-in-Residence at Stanford University. In addition to teaching in the Department of Music, the group is deeply committed to bringing music to less traditional venues than the classroom or concert hall. The foursome's passion for opening up musical arenas to players and listeners alike is evident in their annual chamber music institute for adult amateurs at Stanford and their many forays into the depths of musical meaning with preeminent music educator Robert Kapilow. Whether Lincoln Center or an elementary school classroom, the St. Lawrence maintains a strong desire to share the wonders of chamber music with their listeners, a characteristic of the foursome that has led them to a more informal performance style than one might expect from chamber musicians. Alex Ross of The New Yorker Magazine writes, "the St. Lawrence are remarkable not simply for the quality of their music making, but for the joy they take in the act of connection."

Mezzo-soprano **Michèle Bogdanowicz** has won many scholarships, awards and First place prizes in Canada. She has performed as a soloist in the Aldeburgh Festival, the Orford Festival and the Brevard Music Festival. She has been a soloist with the U of T Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Symphonietta and various orchestras in Ontario. She has performed several roles for Opera in Concert and last year performed the title role in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortileges*

to critical acclaim. A graduate of the University of Toronto, she is completing a Diploma in Operatic Performance.

svaldo Golijov was born in 1960, in an Eastern European Jewish household in La Plata, a provincial capital of half a million people about fifty kilometers from Buenos Aires in officially Catholic Argentina. Golijov grew up surrounded by chamber classical music, Jewish liturgical and klezmer music, and the new tango of Astor Piazzolla. In 1983 he moved to Israel, where he studied with Mark Kopytman at the Rubin Academy of Jerusalem and immersed himself in the different musical traditions colliding in that city. Golijov came to the United States in 1986 and earned his Ph.D at the University of Pennsylvania , where he studied with George Crumb. In 1990 he was a Fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center . He received Tanglewood's Fromm Commission, resulting in *YIDDISHBBUK*, which was premiered by the St. Lawrence String Quartet during Tanglewood's Festival of Contemporary Music in July 1992. Working together with the St Lawrence String Quartet was a turning point in Golijov's musical life. They were the first group of players that took a dive into Golijov's volatile and label-defying musical world and projected it in full form to audi-nces, and Golijov continues to work closely with them.

Golijov has received numerous commissions from many sources, including those from the Spoleto USA Festival; New York's Lincoln Center; the Schleswig Holstein Music and Oregon Bach festivals, and Boston Symphony among others, and has been composer-in-residence at Merkin Hall in New York. He is currently an Associate Professor at College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, is on the faculties of the Boston Conservatory and the Tanglewood Music Center, and Composer-in-Residence for the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Music Alive series.

Golijov is currently working on a centennial commission by the Minnesota Orchestra featuring Dawn Upshaw as soloist, to be premiered in March 2002.

Born in Volos, Greece, educated in the United States and a Canadian citizen since 1985 **Christos Hatzis** is one of the most important composers in Canada and is now enjoying an international reputation for his visceral and haunting music. He is the winner of numerous awards including the Prix Italia, Prix Bohemia Radio, The Jean A. Chalmers National Music Award and the Jules Legér Prize and the 2002 New Pioneer Award. His music is performed, broadcast and recorded all over the world.

Recent and upcoming performances of his music include venues such as the Queen Elizabeth Hall and St. Paul's Cathedral in London, the Museum of Civilization in Ottawa and the Lincoln Center and hundreds of other venues ranging from well knownhalls to small rural communities across North America. His recent multimedia work, CONSTANTINOPLE has been hailed inCanada as "the musical event of the season" and will be touring North America and Europe soon. His music is available on Sony Classical (Greece), Sony Canada, Naxos, CBC Records (Canada) Consipio (Japan) and Cherry Red (England).

Upcoming recording projects of Hatzis' music include a CD of his two string quartets by the St. Lawrence String Quartet (EMI) and a double CD of his choral and his Inuit-inspired works on CBC Records featuring soloists like countertenor Daniel Taylor, baritone Russell Braun, the Elmer Iseler Singers and percussionist Beverley Johnston among others. He is currently working on two new commissioned works, one for soprano Patricia Rosario and the English Chamber Choir and a touring piece for the percussion group NEXUS. In addition to composing, Christos is a Associate Professor of composition at the University of Toronto and writes frequently about contemporary music and its role within present and future societies. His writings, audio samples and other info are available on the Internet at www.hatzis.com

Scott St. John has captured the attention of the musical world through his riveting and virtuoso performances on the violin, viola and electric MIDI violin. Passionate about twentieth century music, Prof. St. John's 2001-2002 season includes Bartok's Second Violin Concerto with the Grand Rapids Symphony, Korngold's Violin Concerto with the Winnipeg Symphony, Berg and Barber Violin Concertos as well as a commissioned double concerto paired with the Brahms Double Concerto in Montreal. Scott St. John's "Chamber Music Company" launched a new series of concerts including world premieres and varied collaborations in New York's Merkin Hall. Scott St. John has been a prizewinner in numerous competitions including the 1992 Munich nternational Violin Competition; winner of the Young Concert Artists Award; First Prize winner of the Alexander Schneider Violin & Viola Competition in 1987. He has performed with orchestras including the Boston Pops and Philadelphia Orchestras, Flemish Radio, Cincinnati, New Hampshire, Toronto and Vancouver Symphony Orchestras, the Royal Philharmonic in London, the New Zealand Chamber Orchestra and the Hamburg Sinfonia. An Avid chamber musician, Scott St. John frequently performs with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (NY), Da Camera of Houston, and at the Seattle, Spoleto, and Vancouver music festivals. European festival engagements include France's Evian Music Festival and the Spoleto Festival in Italy. Scott St. John teaches violin, viola and chamber music at the University of Toronto Faculty of Music where he is also Coordinator of the chamber music programme.

Born in Hertfordshire, England in 1943, **Edward Tait**'s earliest musical involvement was as a boy chorister. In his teens he studied percussion. When he entered the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music he was singing in the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir and playing dance and jazz gigs around Toronto.

Edward Tait began studying the double bass and became a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada in 1964 where he met Frederick Zimmerman. On graduation he spent the 1966/67 season with the New Orleans Philharmonic Symphony and studied with Principal Bassist Robert Rohe.

Awarded a Canada Council grant to study with Fred Zimmerman in 1967, Mr. Tait returned to Toronto and studies with Thomas Monohan after Mr. Zimmerman's untimely death. After two years of freelancing in Toronto with the Canadian Opera Company, the National Ballet of Canada, the Festival Singers, the New Hampshire Summer Music Festival, Theatre, Dance and Jazz gigs, he joined the National Arts Centre Orchestra as Assistant Principal Bass in 1969. A member of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since 1971, he has been the Assistant Principal Bass for 25 years. He plays chamber music, studio recording sessions and teaches at York and Toronto Universities. Mr. Tait also plays in Canada's oldest double bass quartet, "Basstiality", and the Symphony Winds.

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